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Senate

THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MISSOURI EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

Mrs. McCaskill. Mr. President, I ask the Senate to join me today in honoring the 150th anniversary of the state of Missouri's Emancipation Proclamation which ended slavery in the state of Missouri. This proclamation of freedom was imperative for democracy and progress in our state. It is undoubtedly a landmark in Missouri's history.

In 1720, the arrival of 500 slaves to the areas presently known as St. Louis county and Jefferson county, marked the beginning of slavery in Missouri. Those slaves, who were brought to work in the lead mines in those counties, experienced great discrimination over the course of one and a half centuries. When the Territorial Slave Codes were created in 1804, slaves were banned from using firearms, participating in assemblies, holding church services and selling alcohol. Under the codes, slaves were also punished severely for participating in resistance efforts and the mutilation of slaves for the sexual assault of white women was made legal. White men who sexually assaulted slave women, however, were charged for trespassing upon a slave owner's property.

Retained by the State Constitution in 1820, the Territorial Slave Codes were only a premonition of more to come. In 1821, Missouri entered the Union as a slave state with the passing of the Missouri

Compromise and in 1825, the Missouri Legislature passed a law which declared slaves to be incompetent as witnesses in legal cases involving whites. That gloomy trend continued as the education of slaves was banned in an 1847 ordinance. One of the most foreboding events, however, occurred in 1857 with infamous Supreme Court case *Dred Scott v. Sandford* when the judicial system in the state of Missouri and the wider judicial system in the United States decided that persons of African descent were not U.S. citizens.

At the time of the Civil War, over 100,000 slaves were living in the state of Missouri and when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Missouri's slaves were not freed as Missouri was not officially in rebellion against the United States. Missouri's slaves received their freedom on January 11, 1865, when the Emancipation Ordinance was signed at a state convention in St. Louis. That ordinance was made effective immediately and the strict codes of the past were eliminated.

Mr. President, I ask that the Senate join me in reflecting upon this difficult time in Missouri's history and honoring the historical significance of the Emancipation Ordinance which ended slavery in the state of Missouri, one hundred and fifty years ago.